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Funding Opportunities and Challenges for Bike Infrastructure in Suburban Cities: Building Capacity and Funding Resources in Texas

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Funding Opportunities and Challenges for Bike Infrastructure in Suburban Cities: Building Capacity and Funding Resources in Texas

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Abstract

Funding Opportunities and Challenges for Bike Infrastructure in Suburban Cities: Building Capacity and Funding Resources in Texas

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This report explores funding options available for suburban bicycle infrastructure, focusing on cities in Texas. As suburbs are evolving and looking toward becoming more sustainable, a greater interest in implementing bicycle infrastructure is becoming evident. Because interest in creating bike friendly communities in suburbs is relatively new, many communities have limited experience planning and securing funding for these types of projects. Precedents from larger cities provide a helpful start, but there are a number of differences between the funding options and capacity for securing funding between suburbs and these large metros. This report explores funding options that are appropriate for suburban bicycle projects, and ultimately uses the city of Georgetown, Texas as a case study for applying the methodology developed for choosing funding mechanisms.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION, METHODS & STUDY AREA DEFINITION

Introduction

Attitudes toward development patterns and urban form have shifted over the past decade due to global issues such as climate change, financial instability, and new demands from millennials and younger generations (Talen, 2011; Dunham-Jones & Williamson, 2008; Southworth & Owens, 1997). As a result, sustainability is now a larger focus for many residents in U.S. cities, towns, and communities, as well as planning departments and local governments. Suburbs are no exception to this shift and have recently shown interest in retrofitting their previously unsustainable forms to create more sustainable, walkable, and accessible living environments outside of large cities. Common efforts include increasing density and diversity of housing types, promoting mixed use development to reduce the need for long trips, and offering alternative transportation options to cars (Talen, 2011).

One planning-level effort that suburbs can engage in to reduce auto dependence and increase environmental friendliness is the creation and implementation of a bicycle master plan. Bike plans typically set a city's vision for bike infrastructure, identify goals, propose a network of lanes, and outline which types of infrastructure might work best within local context. Many larger cities have publicly accessible bike plans in place which serve as precedents for suburbs looking to create a similar document. However, many bike master plans often include only brief funding sections, which identify sources City governments can explore as they begin implementation of proposed infrastructure. Methods that have been used for funding the proposed bike lanes in precedent-setting plans are not clear, and

suburbs trying to become more sustainably designed through expanding bike access do not have examples to follow. Due to a lack of historical experience, differences between suburbs and large cities regarding funding availability and competitiveness, and lack of guiding literature, suburbs may have difficulty finding the money required to create a bike-friendly environment.

Creating robust funding plans for bicycle infrastructure may be difficult or confusing for local suburban governments for a variety of reasons. For one, geographical location often determines eligibility for primary bike funding sources such as federal, state, and regional grants. This is usually defined based on whether the city is within or outside of an urbanized boundary, and classification can vary for suburban jurisdictions depending on the definition used by a particular funding source. For example, federal grants use the 2010 Census definition of urbanized areas, while in the state of Texas, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) has created its own map to delineate urban and rural areas. It is also not uncommon for suburbs to be split within their own jurisdictions, with portions of the city classified as urban and other portions classified as rural. Because of varying classifications, it might be challenging or time consuming for suburban governments to understand which funding sources are available to them.

Additionally, suburban locations are most often lumped in with the large, urban area that they border and as such they must compete with these larger cities. Historically, larger cities have received more bicycle and pedestrian funding and have had a higher number of projects. This is because large cities tend to have higher demand for cycling, and projects which have an opportunity to provide bike access to a greater number of people. This creates an unbalanced competition for many suburban jurisdictions

(Craddock, et. al., 2009). More often than not, major cities also have some type of dedicated staff whose duties include securing bike funding, while suburbs often do not (Handy & McCann, 2010).

While suburbs face stiff competition from large urban areas, they are also typically disallowed from receiving funding that prioritizes rural areas. This creates a unique funding challenge. Suburbs may be ineligible for funding pots allocated to small communities because they are just a bit too large and close to urban areas. They also struggle to be competitive with major urban areas with stronger demand for bike facilities when forced to go head to head (Craddock, et. al., 2009).

Outline & Methods

This report outlines a number of federal, state, regional, local, and private funding sources that could be pursued in order to build suburban bicycle infrastructure. Next, it provides examples of how some grant sources have previously been awarded. It then explores issues that suburbs face in greater detail and outlines specific conditions within Texas. Finally, the case of Georgetown, Texas is used to demonstrate how a suburban city might choose funding sources to apply for or utilize to implement projects in the City's Bicycle Master Plan.

Suburban bicycle funding challenges were identified through a literature review and close contact and interviews with City officials and staff in the case study location, Georgetown, Texas, an Austin suburb. Funding sources were identified through a number of resources, including Fact Sheets and Notices of Funding Opportunities provided by the

U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), which outline the requirements for applying for funds that originate at the federal level. Resource lists provided by TxDOT and various MPOs were used as starting points to investigate funding streams at the state and regional levels. Publicly available information including minutes from City meetings, news articles, published case studies and MPO documentation of awarded funds were used to determine how suburbs of major Texas cities and other non-Texas suburbs have funded bicycle projects in the past. Representatives from TxDOT and CAMPO were contacted and provided some direction regarding state and regional funding processes. Bike-focused advocacy groups and non-profits also provide lists of local and private funding options. Application processes were explored by walking through the steps firsthand, and many of these steps can be found in Appendix A. The case of Georgetown was explored in tandem with the drafting of the City's Bike Master Plan, which was completed as a joint effort between the City of Georgetown and a team from the University of Texas at Austin.

This analysis is not meant to provide a comprehensive list of all bicycle funding available in the United States. Instead, it addresses those options which could be accessible to suburban cities and takes a deeper look into suburban cities located in Texas. Selection criteria for suburban cities as the term is used in this report are outlined below, in Study Area Definition.

Study Area Definition

This report explores specific bicycle infrastructure funding options for suburban cities in Texas, though it could be useful to suburban areas outside of the state. Suburbs are defined here primarily as cities with fewer than 200,000 people which are on the periphery

of the state's major cities — Austin, Houston, Dallas-Ft. Worth, San Antonio, and El Paso — but are still within the Metropolitan Statistical Areas anchored by these cities. Examples of cities whose bike funding strategies were explored beyond Georgetown include Sugar Land, Conroe and Pearland in the Houston MSA and Round Rock, Hutto, and Cedar Park in the Austin MSA.

While this report focuses specifically on identifying Georgetown's bicycle funding options, the types of funding available and processes for applying this information could prove useful for many Texas suburbs and suburbs across the country seeking to create a funding strategy for a bike master plan. When using this guide in a specific state, region, or locality, it is important to note that every suburban city will face nuances in funding availability and political will. For example, if using this guide outside of the state of Texas, unique state practices will be valuable information to determine the most prudent funding sources as states have some discretion in determining how federal funds are spent in counties, MPOs, and cities, and many different policies are used across the nation based on state priorities. This makes it difficult to compare suburban access to funds across states when the source of origin is federal (Craddock, et. al., 2009). States can also choose to set aside state-level funds for bicycle projects, specifically — an option not explored in this report, as Texas does not have this type of funding (Nguyen-Hoang & Bogin, 2017). MPOs also have an impact on funding options as they can set their own scoring criteria, within federally and state mandated bounds. In addition, leadership at all levels can have an impact on the level of priority that bicycle projects carry (Handy & McCann, 2010).

The following chapter outlines the most viable funding streams that suburban bicycle projects could explore. Chapters 3 and 4 provide examples of how grant funding

has been allocated in Texas in the past, and further exploration of the nuances and importance of clarity of funding options for suburbs, respectively.

CHAPTER 2: FUNDING OPTIONS FOR SUBURBAN BIKE PROJECTS

Funding for bicycle infrastructure projects is available from several different sources. The many grants and other funding options examined below are categorized by the point of access for the locality rather than original source. For example, much of the funding available regionally through MPOs, or at the state level through TxDOT, are funds from the federal government that get allocated by the state or MPOs. Accordingly, the report lists these under either MPO funding or TxDOT funding rather than federal.

This report is intended to perform functionally. Thus, it made sense to group sources under headings that demonstrate the entity that a City should contact for information about applying for or acquiring the funding in question. Categories include: local funding, MPO funding, state/TxDOT funding, private or nonprofit funding, and federal funding. The report also lists funding options in order of appropriateness for bicycle projects and ease of access, starting with local funding options and ranging to federal discretionary funding. Federal discretionary funds are awarded directly from the federal government (federal funding category below), and federal formula funds are awarded through a designated formula to states and MPOs to make ultimate decisions regarding allocation (state and MPO funding categories below) (Grants.gov, 2019).

Local Funding

Municipalities often use local funds to complete bike projects, as stated in the introduction to this report. Beyond using the City's General Fund, there are several other

options for creative project funding using City's resources. Cities may prefer these local sources because they do not require application processes or waiting periods, and, unlike grants, often do not have specific spending requirements set by outside agencies. Hence, local funds are perceived to be more flexible and expeditious, and to allow the City more autonomy in spending decisions.

TIRZ Dollars

A Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZ) is a geographic area in which Tax Increment Financing (TIF) has been implemented. A City invests in public infrastructure in this area to help draw private investment, and then funds the improvements through the portion of the tax base that rises above the standing base level for a set period of time (Texas Comptroller, 2018). State law governs the use of TIF or TIRZ funding by defining which types of expenditures may and may not be allowable uses of these public dollars. Bicycle routes are allowed to be funded by TIRZs under state law, and many cities in Texas have created TIRZs with the intention of using some of the money for bike and pedestrian projects.

The city of Belton Texas adjusted the boundaries of its TIRZ to encompass a portion of a hike and bike trail that was being considered for TxDOT Transportation Alternatives funding in order to use the TIRZ to make the local match requirement (City of Belton, 2018). San Antonio's Midtown TIRZ Master Plan includes an entire physical plan for bike lanes and infrastructure to be funded by the TIRZ (City of San Antonio, 2011). Houston has built bike infrastructure within several of its TIRZs using the funding captured by this mechanism (City of Houston, 2017). The case city, Georgetown, has four current

TIRZs which could be leveraged to either fund bike projects in full within their bounds, or to supplement other funding sources. Bike and pedestrian infrastructure are already defined allowable uses of these zones in Georgetown.

Capital Improvement Programs

Funding allocated in Capital Improvement Programs (CIPs) comes from a variety of streams including local property tax revenues and other local taxes, fees, and bonds. Funding bicycle projects through the CIP is a way of committing existing or future funds to bike projects rather than generating new funding specifically for these projects. However, it is a powerful way to propel projects forward and get them onto the ground using dollars already available to a city government. City departments compete to have these funds allocated to their own projects, and political priorities often play a strong role in CIP spending decisions.

As an example, the City of Sugar Land allocated $500,000 of general revenue in their most recent CIP, approved in 2018, to begin design and construction of projects identified in their 2013 Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan (City of Sugarland, 2018).

Bonds

A city can issue bonds in order to fund public improvements of all kinds, but a standalone active transportation bond is unlikely. More often, Texas cities wrap bike infrastructure into mobility or streets bonds. This means that the municipality issues debt in order to raise capital to fund specific types of projects, and they typically must be approved by voters. Local bike advocates can play a role in ensuring that active

transportation be included within a transportation bond by expressing their interest, creating a petition, and attending Council and Committee meetings. The City of Austin, for example, issued a very large Mobility Bond in 2016, $137M of which was allocated for local mobility projects which include sidewalks, bikeways, urban trails, and Safe Routes to Schools projects (City of Austin, 2016).

Development Impact Fees

Development impact fees are regulated by municipal subdivision policies. They can require developers to donate land, infrastructure, or funds to support public amenities like biking and walking infrastructure to offset the impact of the new development. States enable and govern which types of infrastructure impact fees can be used for, including bike infrastructure, and requirements and allowances vary across the U.S. Texas allows fees for street improvements and does not explicitly disallow bicycle infrastructure's inclusion (State of Texas, 2011).

For example, Sarasota County, FL recently adopted a multi-modal transportation impact fee. This fee expanded its previous requirement of developers to pay for road construction and maintenance to cover the construction of bike and pedestrian facilities along with other modes. The fees are expected to raise $400 million for multi-modal infrastructure in the next 20 years (Sarasota County, 2018).

Parking Benefits Districts

A Parking Benefits District (PBD) is a defined area of a city where a portion of or all parking revenue collected is reinvested into streets, sidewalks, and general multi-modal connectivity and maintenance. Austin has implemented a nationally known version of this model in its West Campus neighborhood, where residents were having a problem with students leaving cars on streets with free parking for long spans of time. Students also needed improved sidewalks and bike lanes to travel to campus, and a PBD was able to solve both issues. This option may be a bit more difficult for suburbs where parking is often free of charge, especially those that do not offer comprehensive public transit alternatives. However, suburbs in the U.S. with historic squares or tourist districts have set a precedent for studying Parking Benefits Districts such as the one implemented in Old Town Pasadena, California (Geeting, 2016).

It is often politically unpopular to begin charging for parking where it has historically been free, particularly in suburbs where residents tend to drive to reach destinations. Drivers who do not also bike may feel that it is unjust that parking fees paid by vehicle users subsidize cycling infrastructure. Businesses may also oppose the introduction of paid parking due to a feared reduction of customers. Until suburbs become more multimodal with individual residents utilizing multiple travel modes, a PBD may not be an available option in many smaller suburbs, including Georgetown. The most feasible location to introduce paid parking is within Central Business Districts, which could be tested as a pilot project in coming years as the population grows and visitors increase.

MPO Funding

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) oversee allocating most of the federal formula funding to cities that can be directed toward bicycle and pedestrian projects. For instance, decisions about using funds from the Transportation Alternatives set aside (TA), Federal Transportation Administration (FTA), and typically Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) funding programs are made by MPOs rather than state DOTs for areas within the MPO's geographical boundaries. MPOs typically receive a fairly predictable amount of funding each year that can be awarded to chosen projects, and the agency opens a general call for projects every two years to allocate it for the coming two years.

Transportation Alternatives Funding

Transportation Alternatives (TA) funds are the major federal funding source available for bike infrastructure. The FHWA clarifies that "a variety of smaller-scale transportation projects such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, recreational trails, safe routes to school projects, community improvements such as historic preservation and vegetation management, and environmental mitigation related to stormwater and habitat connectivity" (FHWA, 2017) are all eligible project types under the current TA funding restrictions. Eligible sponsors for applications include local governments, regional transportation authorities, transit agencies, natural resource or public land agencies, school districts, local education agencies, schools, tribal governments, and nonprofits which are responsible for the administration of local transportation safety programs (FHWA, 2019).

TA Set Aside funds are enabled by the federal FAST Act, and are allocated for bicycle and pedestrian projects in two different ways in Texas and around the country. One half of these funds is allocated through TxDOT, which directs these dollars to areas outside of urbanized boundaries, and the other half is sub-allocated to MPOs based on their relative share of the total State population within urbanized boundaries. It should be noted that the total TA fund is split into these halves after a deduction for the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is set-aside which only the Governor can opt out of, should he or she decide not to fund trails.

The map below shows urbanized areas in grey, which are ineligible for TxDOT direct TA funds, and may only receive this type of funding through their respective MPOs.

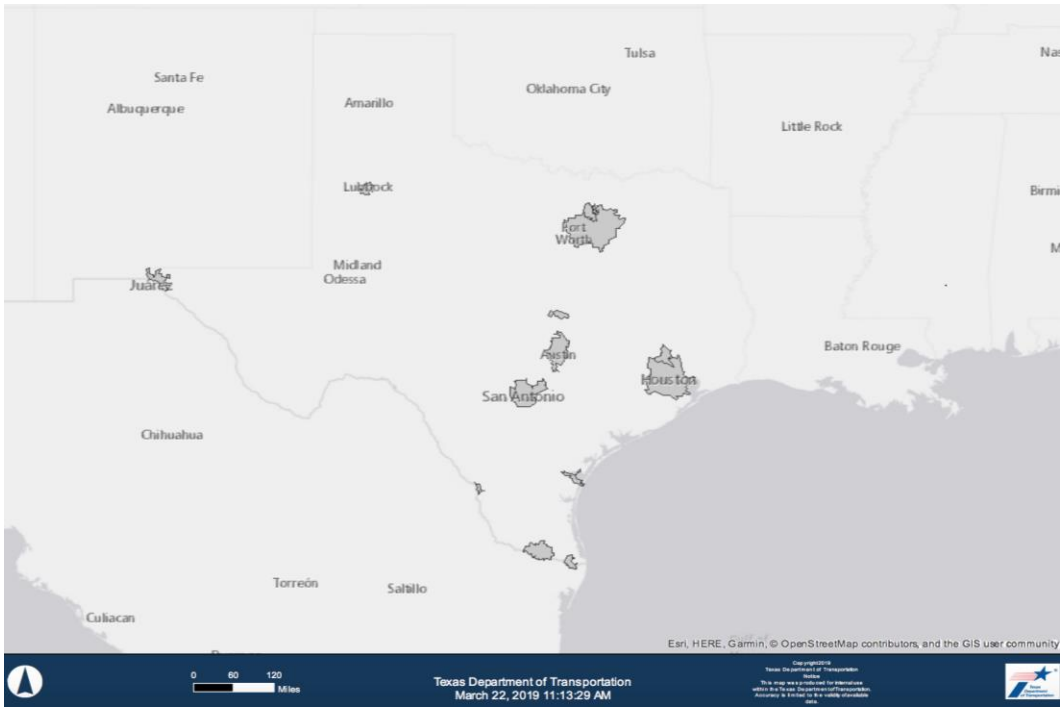

Figure 1. Urbanized area boundaries

The only exception to this rule is the somewhat separate Safe Routes to School funding. SRTS is part of the federal TA dollars allocated to the state, and can be awarded anywhere in the state by TxDOT. All other TxDOT TA funding must adhere to the MPO boundaries. Additionally, areas within MPO boundaries, but outside of urbanized areas can still receive MPO TA funds. Portions of Texas outside of these urbanized areas, but within MPO boundaries are eligible for both TxDOT direct TA funds and MPO TA funds, while areas inside the urbanized area are eligible solely for MPO funding.

Suburbs are typically within these urbanized area boundaries but are not the large anchor city(ies) of the MPO service area. Funding options available for cities such as Georgetown, Cedar Park and Round Rock fall within the Capital Area Metropolitan

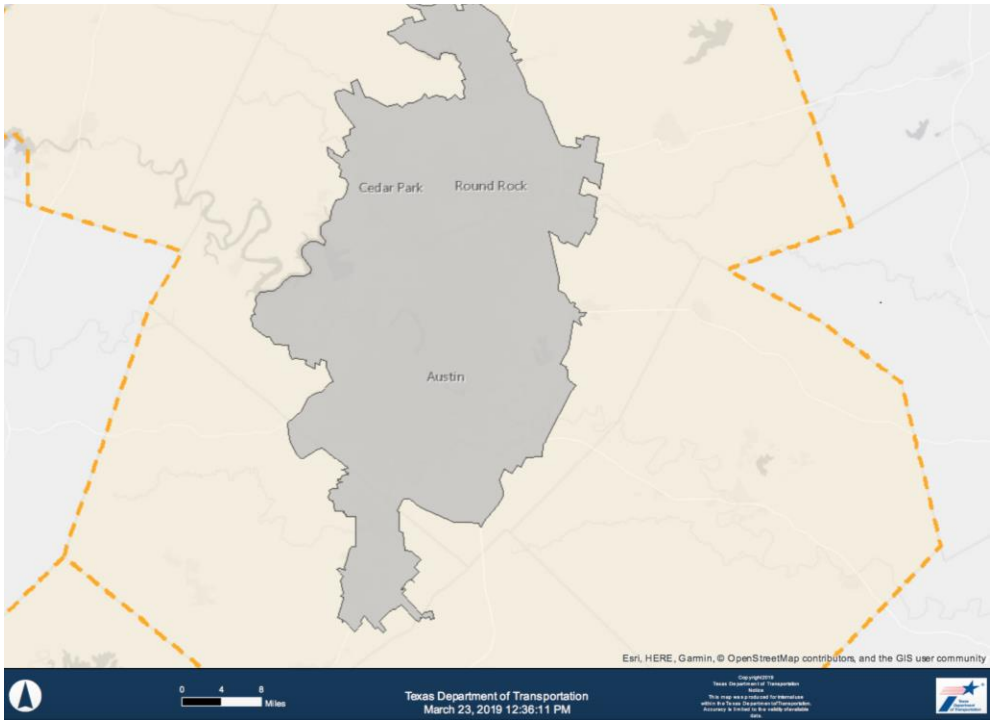

Figure 2. Austin urbanized boundary and CAMPO boundary

Planning Organization's boundaries and the urbanized area boundary ineligible for TxDOT TA Set Aside funds. The map below shows Austin's grey urbanized area, and the MPO boundary in orange.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)

This FHWA grant provides transportation funding to help areas comply with the Clean Air Act. It is meant to support projects and programs that help reduce congestion and improve air quality, specifically in areas that are currently not in compliance with federal air quality standards, or to maintain progress for those that have been out of compliance in the past. Funding is allocated using a formula based on the number of people living in the non-attainment zone, and state governments can choose to withhold some of the state funding for projects of their own choosing. Texas allocates all of its CMAQ funds to non-attainment MPOs, however. In areas under the governance of an MPO, a project must be included in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in order to receive funding (FHWA, 2018). The Austin area is not currently designated as an air quality nonattainment or maintenance area and so does not receive these funds. However, CMAQ funds have been used by suburbs of Houston, which is a non-attainment zone. Other non-attainment zones in Texas include Dallas-Ft. Worth, San Antonio, and El Paso.

State (TxDOT) Funding

A variety of federal funding sources flow to state DOTs. In Texas this is the Texas Department of Transportation, or TxDOT, which then allocates and administers the funds to improve road conditions. Most of this funding can be used for bike projects, only if those bike improvements are part of a larger highway project. The options below are the most

relevant to consider for cycling-specific projects. Open communication with assigned TxDOT district representatives and a frequent check for calls for projects on the TxDOT website is recommended in case a bike project can be worked into a larger City or TxDOT-owned road project. Participation in MPO meetings and advisory committees are also helpful in order to stay up to date on upcoming projects.

Safe Routes to School

The federal government allocates Safe Routes to School (SRTS) funds to each state by setting aside a portion of each state's Surface Transportation Block Grant funding for Transportation Alternatives (TA), which includes walking and biking projects. The federal government uses a ratio calculated under the former Transportation Enhancements program to choose the correct ratio of the total Transportation Alternatives funding pot each state receives. A portion of this funding is SRTS funding.

Half of the state's TA funding is sub-allocated based on population to MPOs, and the other half is available throughout the state and is administered by the State DOT. For state level SRTS funding, eligibility is not split into urban and rural categories, which are clearly delineated in the MPO funding section. As a result, any suburban Texas City can apply directly through TxDOT for SRTS funding.

The projects must support walking or biking to school and must be located within two miles of K-8 schools (TxDOT, 2019). TxDOT opens these calls every two years and has recently opened applications in 2015, 2017, and February of 2019. Because TxDOT and MPOs are each awarded half of state TA funding, they have similar processes for

allocating the funds. The agency, like MPOs, opens the call for SRTS funding alongside its own TA funding program. No local match is required, and funds can be used for project development and construction. School Districts and non-profits can work together to co-sponsor these applications, but the primary sponsor must be the local government.

While the application process for this type of funding is long and can be arduous, there is a high level of support offered by TxDOT to successfully complete application materials. There are scheduled workshops around the state during the call for projects, and close contact with District and SRTS coordinators is encouraged. Smaller Texas cities have had high rates of success in winning these grants.

Incorporating Bike Lanes on TxDOT Roads

TxDOT owns many roads throughout the state and funds and implements the resurfacing and upkeep of these right of ways. TxDOT always coordinates road projects that are located inside of municipal boundaries with those local governments, and this provides an opportunity to incorporate bike lanes and bike crossings. Funding for TxDOT comes from the federal level, as well as taxes and fees. Many of these sources can be used to incorporate or maintain bicycle infrastructure, but funds received through state motor fuel taxes cannot be used to support alternative modes of transportation such as cycling (TxDOT, 2018).

Municipalities still must be proactive in order to incorporate bike facilities into larger projects sponsored by TxDOT. This includes open communication with TxDOT representatives and constant check-ins on upcoming projects, as the inclusion of bike

infrastructure is most likely if it is advocated for prior to the beginning of the design phase. There is an opportunity to make a particularly strong case following the implementation of TxDOT's related policy in 2011, which requires TxDOT to consider bike and pedestrian facilities on all road projects as part of the initial NEPA process. To do so, TxDOT considers existing local bicycle plans and MPO level plans (TxDOT, 2011). Local policies can also be put in place that require or encourage the incorporation of bike infrastructure when roads are altered, such as Complete Streets Policies and official adoption of NACTO design standards. Examples of roads that are on the TxDOT system in Georgetown that were frequently mentioned in the bike planning process could benefit from the type of collaboration described above include Austin Ave. and Leander Rd.

Private & Nonprofit

Funding for bike infrastructure does not necessarily have to come through a governmental process. Certain private businesses and nonprofits also provide grant opportunities on either a regular or ad hoc basis. Most of these grants are relatively small when compared to other sources and may be better suited to planning or education and outreach efforts, rather than capital improvements. The following are a few of the most popular examples that are available to Texas suburbs.

PeopleForBikes Community Grant Program

This bike-oriented advocacy group has been awarding grants each year since 1999. More than 400 grants have been awarded, with at least one in each of the 50 states. Applications are accepted for specific bike infrastructure projects, or in some cases

advocacy programs, and can be submitted by non-profit organizations with a focus on bicycling, active transportation, or community development, city or county agencies or departments, and state or federal agencies working locally.

A maximum of $10,000 can be requested, and the requested amount must cover less than 50% of the total project cost. PeopleForBikes holds either one or two grant cycles each year, and occasionally a grant cycle is dedicated to a particular type of project. For example, the Fall 2019 grant cycle is committed to promoting cycling for youth and will only fund bike park and pump track projects. It has been promised that 2020 cycles will open grants back up to most bike infrastructure. Due to a very competitive process, only 10-15% of applications typically receive funding, and about $100,000 is awarded each year in all (People for Bikes, 2019).

Suburbs might use these funds to help prepare advocacy groups and citizens to make the case for inclusion of bike projects in a future bond issue. The funding could also be used to help meet a local match requirement for a separate grant, or to implement some smaller infrastructure proposals such as sharrows – painted street signage that indicates the presence of bicycles.

The Walmart Foundation Community Grant Program

The Walmart Foundation Community Grant contributes smaller amounts of funding to service areas where they have a retail presence, totaling $42 million in its last cycle. Grants range from $250 to $5,000 and must serve one of the Foundation's eight areas of funding. The areas relevant to bike infrastructure projects include:

- Quality of life: Improving access to recreation, arts or cultural experiences for low income individuals and families in the United States
- Community and economic development: Improving local communities for the benefit of low-income individuals and families in the United States
- Public Safety: Supporting public safety programs through training programs or equipment in the United States
- Environmental sustainability: Preventing waste, increasing recycling or supporting other programs that work to improve the environment in the United States (The Walmart Foundation, 2019).

Because of the relatively small size of this grant, it might be used for experimental, temporary painting of bike infrastructure by community volunteers, or helping raise awareness for cycling in the community.

State Farm Good Neighbor Citizenship Company Grants

State Farm, the national insurance company, opens a grant application cycle each fall to provide a total of $1 million in funds for projects that further one of the following three themes: safety, community development, or education. Bike infrastructure could potentially fall under the safety subcategory of auto and roadway safety, or the community development subcategory of community revitalization. Municipalities can apply under the umbrella of a particular program that aligns with one of the themes, such as Bike Georgetown. Average grant amounts range from $5,000 to $25,000 and there are not any strict rules for use or matching requirements (State Farm, 2019).

Federal Funding

On the whole, the federal government controls very few discretionary funding pots — funds that are not allocated to states by formula — that could directly support bike projects. The most likely federally controlled funds are BUILD Grants. Other options such as TIFIA loans, and potentially INFRA funds could support bike infrastructure in limited circumstances as explained below. Federal funding typically requires a local match component, which means the federal funds can only cover a certain portion of the total project cost. The most common requirements are an 80% to 20% match, which means the applicant or a partner on behalf of the applicant must provide 20% of the money for the project as a prerequisite for the federal government supplying the remaining 80%.

BUILD Grants

Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development, or BUILD Grants, a restructured version of Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grants, are one of the primary funding sources for which a locality would apply directly through the federal government to access bike funds. Both BUILD grants and past TIGER grants are intended to rebuild major infrastructure in the US, and as such a bike project would need to be part of a much larger highway project that simply incorporates bike lanes as an element. The improvement is required to improve a bridge, highway, or other local or regional infrastructure in order to bring it up to a state of good repair (USDOT, 2019). Under the current federal administration's requirements, BUILD grants are focusing on historic underinvestment in rural areas.

It is notable that there have been changes in the scoring criteria under the current administration beyond the emphasis on rural spending. The shift to BUILD kept the scoring criteria from the original TIGER grant program, but added points for public-private-partnerships, innovative funding strategies, and the portion of the project that could be funded by nonfederal dollars. There is also a greater focus on large and economically significant projects, again making it prudent to consider partnerships with other agencies for inclusion of bike infrastructure as a component of large projects (USDOT, 2018).

The USDOT classifies candidate projects as either urban or rural, depending on the project location as represented by the boundaries of the 2010 Census. In the 2018 Call, the full amount available for allocation was $1.5 billion, and a minimum of 30% of these funds were required to go to rural areas. For example, Georgetown is eligible under both sets of requirements in different parts of the city, but projects are designated as one or the other and will not be split if they cross boundaries. The map shown (using the example of Georgetown) is a publicly available Census resource and can be used by any city to determine their own areas eligible for each pot of funding.

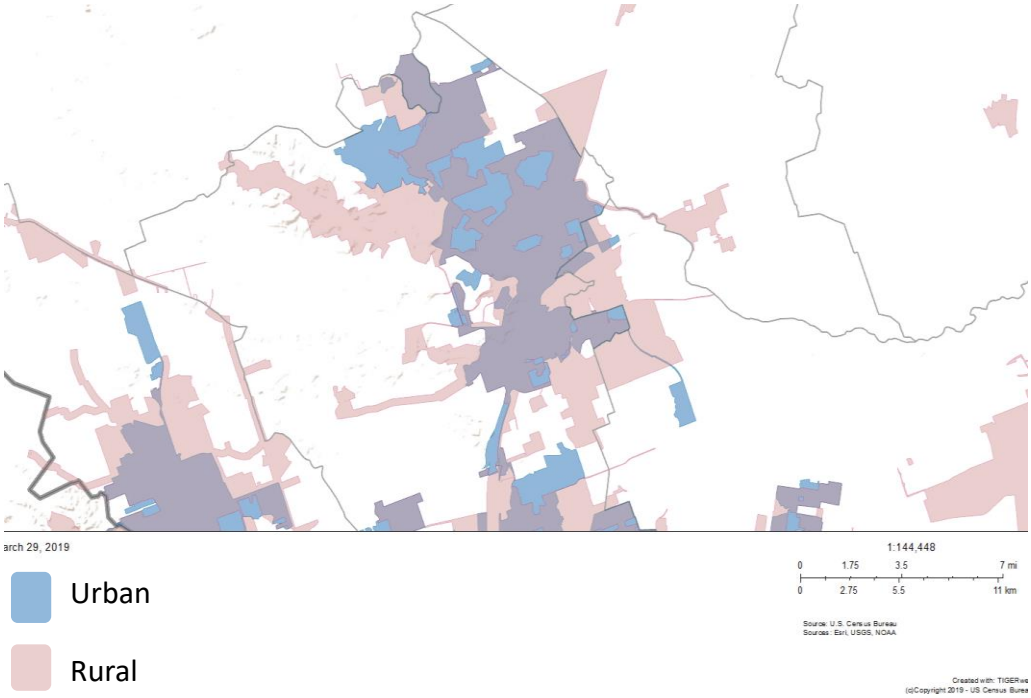

Figure 3. Urban vs. rural areas of Georgetown (2010 Census)

For projects located in urban areas, the minimum award is $5 million, and the minimum total project cost must be $6.25 million to meet the 20% match requirements. This means that at a minimum, $1.25 million would need to be put forth from other sources by the City. For projects located in rural areas, the minimum award is $1 million (USDOT, 2018). Federal funds can be used for 80% of project costs in urban areas, and potentially a higher percentage in rural ones. Partnerships are rewarded within the criteria for scoring provided in the Notice of Funding Opportunity, and since these projects are usually large and include improvements to major highways or bridges, it would be prudent for suburban communities to apply jointly with TxDOT or their respective MPO.

Texas was awarded over $104M in BUILD Grants as a result of the 2018 call across a combination of rural and urban projects. None of these projects included bicycle infrastructure, but it is important to note that many other winning projects across the nation did. Quite a few of these were smaller towns and the City was a sponsor of the project (USDOT, 2018).

Additionally, Texas cities have won TIGER Grants in the past which did include bike infrastructure as a component. The City of Brownsville won a TIGER Grant in 2016 for a project that married bus expansion with biking and walking facilities, and San Antonio's VIA Metropolitan Transit Authority won a TIGER Grant in 2011 for a large adaptive reuse multi-modal transportation plaza and bike and pedestrian infrastructure (USDOT, 2018).

TIFIA

The Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) provides low interest federal loans on large and significant transportation infrastructure projects and can be used alongside many federal and other grants. For example, BUILD Grants have authorized a small amount to be used in conjunction with TIFIA loans. TIFIA only finances 49% of the total project cost, and funds are expected to be leveraged to encourage private or grant investment. This program is not meant to operate as a grant and places heavy emphasis on filling market gaps and attracting private investment to revenue producing infrastructure projects such as toll roads and HOT lanes (USDOT, 2018). Putting together a funding package of this nature would require a very high level of effort, aside from the application itself and is not well suited to a suburban government's goals.

To qualify for a traditional TIFIA loan, a project must have a minimum total cost of $50 million and be regionally or nationally significant. This clearly means that it would be unreasonable to apply for a project solely focusing on bike infrastructure. However, TIFIA may make sense when bike infrastructure is installed on a major highway. This type of project is not recommended in the Bike Georgetown plan, or any plan that revolves around a shadow network, which directs cyclists away from high-speed, high-volume roads and toward more comfortable streets. Therefore, it is not recommended that this type of project be taken on specifically to implement a bike plan. Again, if TxDOT applies for this type of funding, and a suburban government is able to co-sponsor the application without dedicating its manpower specifically, it could be prudent to push for bike lanes to be incorporated into the design of those outside projects (USDOT, 2017).

A modified version of TIFIA may provide a suitable funding option for rural areas. The Rural Project Initiative (RPI) reduces TIFIA's total project cost threshold to $10 million and is available for projects in areas outside the urban boundary, as shown above for BUILD Grants. It also adds bicycle and pedestrian projects, specifically, to eligibility. If a suburb should find itself situated partially in a rural area, it could potentially make sense to leverage TIFIA funding for a large project, or for projects that have been combined (USDOT, 2018).

INFRA

Infrastructure For Rebuilding America (INFRA) grants were developed for nationally or regionally significant freight and highway projects. It really isn't appropriate

for bike infrastructure funding, and the roads that these grants would be applied on would not be roads recommended by many bike plans to direct cyclists toward. For that reason, it will not be explored in depth, although a large TxDOT or MPO sponsored project could involve collaboration with city governments at various points for this type of project, and the City could request that bike infrastructure be installed. A suburban city alone should not be directing its efforts toward this funding opportunity for a bike-specific project, but if a larger body were the primary application sponsor it could be reasonable to advocate for the inclusion of cycling facilities in the project (USDOT, 2019). The federal government allows bicycle infrastructure to be funded using INFRA grants, but clearly states that an active transportation project would not be competitive for an award and is not factored in as a positive attribute in the grant decision (FHWA, 2018). In the most recent call for projects, 10 percent of funds were reserved for small projects with a minimum cost of $5M and the remaining funds were directed toward projects that required at least $25M (USDOT, 2018).

CHAPTER 3: HISTORICAL EXAMPLES OF GRANT ALLOCATION IN TEXAS

Safe Routes to School and TA Set Aside funds are the most viable and suitable types of funding, outside of local sources, for suburban bicycle projects in Texas. The reasons for this are explored more in depth in Chapter 5. Here, in Chapter 3, the report contextualizes how these funding sources might be relevant to suburban bicycle plans. The chapter illustrates the types of governments who apply for Safe Routes to School and TA Set Aside dollars.

The following examples consist of results from calls for projects opened by TxDOT, Austin's MPO CAMPO, and Houston's H-GAC. A call for projects is the term used when an agency opens the competition for a specific type of funding. Each call is announced by the agency choosing the projects, and has an opening date, clear requirements, and a closing date. This process must be followed to distribute all funds that originate at the federal level and are handed down to states or MPOs.

Example: TxDOT Safe Routes to School Funding in Texas Cities

The following example explores past application rounds for state-level SRTS dollars in Texas. The patterns visible in of past applications suggest which types of entities normally sponsor these applications and how competitive such applicants may be in the future. TxDOT has made available information regarding what part of Texas 2015 applications originated from, as well as the percentage of TAP applications that were specifically requesting SRTS funding[1].

[1] The TAP funding program is the predecessor to the current TA Set Aside program. It is the original program that consolidated Safe Routes to School, Transportation Enhancements, and the Recreational Trails Program, similar to how it is set up now.

Twenty-eight percent of all 119 TAP applications were SRTS applications — the only portion of state TAP funds that Georgetown and peer cities would be eligible for, as the remaining portions must come from their MPO as outlined in the previous chapter. This accounted for approximately 33 total applications and most of those projects requested less than $500,000.

Applications were reported only at the county level and as a range instead of a distinct number, making it difficult to determine exactly how many applications originated within particular city limits. It can be deduced that surprisingly few large cities in Texas submitted applications at all for SRTS funding in this particular call for projects, with the exception of the Dallas area, which applied for between 5-10 applications for projects. One of these is likely the Dallas Run Road Trail, for which Dallas County applied. This county project is eligible for TxDOT TA funding because it is outside of the urbanized area boundaries.

The map below shows the counties from which applications were submitted to the 2015 Call (TxDOT, 2015). TxDOT funded four of the 33 candidate Safe Routes to School projects applied for in the 2015 TAP call. Three of these were in rural areas. One approved project is an exact match for the type of funding that Georgetown and its peer cities could receive should they apply for TxDOT SRTS funds.

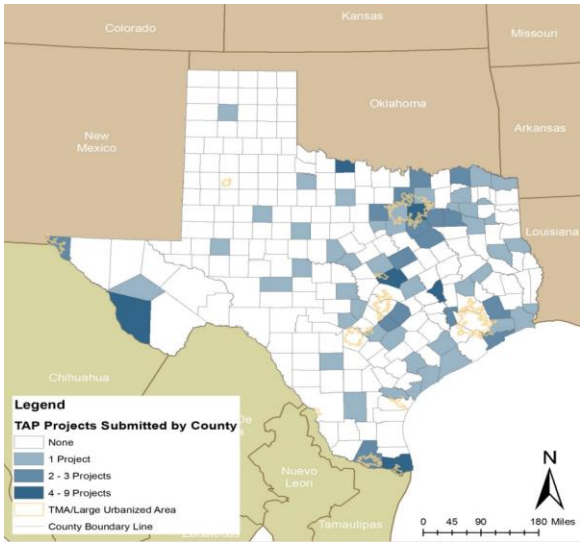

Figure 4. Submitted TAP applications by county (TxDOT, 2015)

The project area is Anthony, TX, within El Paso's urbanized boundary that is ineligible for TxDOT TA funds but can access TxDOT SRTS funding just like other Texas suburbs. The Town of Anthony sponsored the application, and the amount awarded was $315,508. The fact that a SRTS project within a city's urbanized boundaries (and therefore eligible for both TxDOT SRTS and MPO TA funding) won a SRTS award should be encouraging that other suburbs might do the same.

Examples: MPO Bike Funding in Texas Studies

The following two examples track the actual flow of funds from MPOs in Texas to local bicycle projects in suburbs. By understanding which cities have applied in the past, and what their level of success was (as available), it is possible to help determine whether the payoff might outweigh the level of effort required to submit for MPO TA funds. Successful applicants also offer strategies for creating more competitive materials.

The first example comes from information provided publicly by the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, CAMPO, in the Austin region regarding its allocated TA Set Aside funds between 2015 and 2017. The second examples come from the Houston-Galveston Area Council, H-GAC, from publicly available information regarding its 2018 call for projects.

EXAMPLE 1: OBLIGATED BIKE FUNDING FOR AUSTIN'S SUBURBS 2015-2017

While the dollar amount of federal bike funds received by MPOs from the federal government is fairly consistent year-to-year, MPOs can choose to allocate that funding differently, causing varying annual allocation amounts. CAMPO's total obligated bicycle and pedestrian federal funds in fiscal year 2017 were $393,164. This funding went to a single project in Smithfield, outside of the urbanized boundary, which installed ADA accessible sidewalks (CAMPO, 2017). In 2016, however, much more federal funding was obligated to bicycle and pedestrian projects at $8,156,170 from CAMPO TA funds. Several projects were in Williamson County, home of Georgetown (CAMPO, 2016). However, other nearby suburbs seemingly apply for and receive much more of this particular type of funding from CAMPO than Georgetown.

In 2016, projects included multiple sidewalks in Round Rock, sidewalks in Leander, a $1.5M bike and pedestrian path in Taylor, a bike and pedestrian path in San Marcos, a bike and pedestrian path in Hutto, and a sidewalk and pedestrian bridge in Cedar Park. There were also funds awarded for bike signals, bike share stations, and sidewalks within the Austin city limits. A more specific breakdown of allocated federal funds is shown in the table below. Funding received by Austin is included at the bottom of the table

for reference. It should also be noted that many of the projects for which bike and pedestrian funding were allocated are actually sidewalk projects and do not help to build dedicated biking infrastructure.

Table 1. CAMPO TA Funding

GEORGETOWN'S PEER CITIES, ALLOCATED CAMPO TA FUNDING **indicates city is outside of urbanized area*			
	Population *(2017 5-year ACS Est.)*	**Obligated Bike & Pedestrian Funds 2015-2017**	**Project Type**
		2016	
Georgetown	63,062	$0	-
Cedar Park	70,010	$216,683.20	Sidewalk & Ped Bridge
Round Rock	116,369	$297,078.40 $1,005,364.00	Sidewalks Sidewalks
Hutto	22,644	$871,200.00	Pedestrian & Bike Path
Leander	40,338	$600,691.20	Sidewalks
Pflugerville	58,013	$0	-
San Marcos*	59,935	$1,672,325.25	Pedestrian & Bike Path
Taylor*	16,603	$1,200,000.00	Pedestrian & Bike Path
Austin included for point of reference below			
Austin	916,906	$1,330,415.20 $173,912.80 $788,500.00	Sidewalks Bike Traffic Signals Bike Share Stations

Within the urbanized area, Cedar Park and Hutto received CAMPO TA funding for bicycle projects, although both also included pedestrian facilities.

Of the winning applications, the most similar suburbs to Georgetown are Cedar Park and Hutto and could be appropriate peer cities to explore in terms of how bike lanes have been funded up until this point. Both cities are smaller and fall into similar funding-restricted boundaries to Georgetown. San Marcos and Taylor could also be interesting to explore in terms of staffing constraints, as both were able to apply for this type of funding with smaller staff numbers akin to those in Georgetown. Only data about those awarded funds is currently available from CAMPO. Information about applications received but not awarded was requested, but this data request was not fulfilled.

EXAMPLE 2: HOUSTON SUBURBS' TA FUNDING APPLICATIONS

In the following case study, H-GAC funding will be explored in order to determine whether Houston suburbs were able to apply for regional TA funding. The boundary map for the Houston area is provided below.

H-GAC, the MPO for the Houston area, has publicly provided information regarding all applications submitted. The recent 2018 Call for Projects data illuminates the number and type of municipalities which submitted applications for bike and pedestrian projects to H-GAC to receive TA funds. Since the call was so recent, there is not information available yet about which projects have actually been awarded the funding requested.

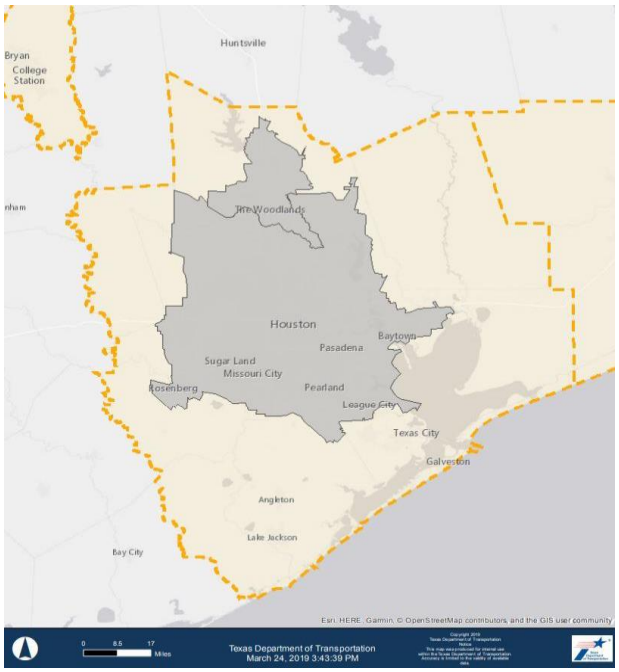

Figure 5. Houston's urbanized area and MPO boundary

The fact that these cities applied for funding suggests that they could marshal the time and resources to do so. It is notable that several of the smaller jurisdictions have hired companies to apply for grants on their behalf, suggesting that they either do not have the manpower to complete these tasks internally, or have calculated that staff time is better spent on other projects. Cities that have enlisted outside assistance include very small places such as Mont Belvieu, as well as cities larger than Georgetown such as Conroe.

Table 2. H-GAC Applications 2018

GEORGETOWN PEER CITY APPLICATIONS FOR HGAC 2018 **indicates city is outside of urbanized area*				
	Population *(2017 5-year ACS Est.)*	**Active Transportation Funding Applied for**	**Project Type**	**Sponsor**
		2018		
Friendswood	38,811	$669,000	Multi-use path & bridge	City of Friendswood
		$3,518,000	Sidewalk & Ped Bridge	TxDOT in partnership with City of Friendswood Downtown Economic Development Corporation
Pasadena	153,909	$3,950,028	Bike & Ped Path	TxDOT
Pearland	113,963	$3,062,000	Hike & Bike Trail	City of Pearland
Clute*	11,414	$2,774,000	Shared use path	City of Clute (The Goodman Corporation has been hired to apply for funding)
Angleton*	19,280	$2,864,454	Sidewalks	Gulf Coast Center with City of Angleton (The Goodman Corporation has been hired to apply for funding)
Stafford	18,092	$166,732	Sidewalks	City of Stafford
Meadows Place	4,685	$3,450,000	Shared use path	City of Meadows Place in partnership with City of Stafford
Conroe	77,086	$3,962,273	Sidewalks	City of Conroe (The Goodman Corporation has been hired to apply for funding)
Mont Belvieu	5,206	$1,602,612	Hike & Bike Trail	City of Mont Belvieu (BGE Inc. has been hired to apply for funding)
				Houston included below for reference
Houston	2,267,336	$503,857	Bike & Ped Bridge	TxDOT
		$35,322,216	Hike & Bike Trail	Houston Parks & Rec Department

There are also several funding partnerships between multiple cities, and cities plus agencies or nonprofits. TxDOT seems to sponsor many of the applications, although most of these are in the City of Houston and are large projects on TxDOT right of ways.

Data is available regarding the H-GAC TA 2015 Call for Projects, and the actual funding that was allocated during that previous competition. In all, 20 bike and pedestrian specific projects were obligated funding. Thirty-four were submitted for consideration.

Notably, projects that failed to secure funding were located almost exclusively in the city proper portion of Houston. The applications were submitted by a number of sponsors, including multiple management districts, county improvement districts, Harris County, the Parks and Recreation Department, the Memorial City Redevelopment Authority, and TxDOT. No suburban cities that applied for bike and pedestrian funding alone were denied.

Table 3. H-GAC Obligated Funding 2015

GEORGETOWN PEER CITY OBLIGATED HGAC FUNDING 2015 **indicates city is outside of urbanized area*				
	Population (ACS, 2017)	**Active Transportation Funding Awarded**	**Project Type**	**Sponsor**
		2015		
Pearland	113,963	$4,998,000	Hike & Bike Trail	City of Pearland
		$1,904,000	Safe Routes to School	City of Pearland
Conroe	77,086	$3,405,000	Bike Trail	City of Conroe & TxDOT
		$974,000	Safe Routes to School	City of Conroe
Lake Jackson	27,317	$2,368,000	Bike Trail	City of Lake Jackson & TxDOT
League City	98,215	$2,632,000	Hike & Bike Trail	City of League City & TxDOT
		$2,630,000	Shared Use Path	City of League City & TxDOT
		$1,383,000	Bike Trail	City of League City & TxDOT
South Houston	17,563	$876,000	Sidewalks	City of South Houston
Webster	11,128	$5,351,000	Bike Lanes	City of Webster & TxDOT
Humble	15,736	$1,806,000	Multimodal Connector	Harris County

Table 3. (Continued)

Houston included below for reference				
Houston	2,267,336	$2,242,000	Hike & Bike Trail	City of Houston & TxDOT
		$1,502,000	Shared Use Path	City of Houston & TxDOT
		$311,000	Shared Use Path	City of Houston & TxDOT
		$3,484,000	B-cycle Expansion	City of Houston & Houston Bike Share
		$1,606,000	Bike Lanes	City of Houston
		$6,732,000	Hike & Bike Trail	City of Houston
		$399,000	Shared Use Path	City of Houston & TxDOT
		$1,586,000	Sidewalks	Houston Downtown Management District
		$395,000	Hike & Bike Trail	Westchase Management District

OBSERVATIONS FROM MPO EXAMPLES

In exploring the data available from CAMPO and H-GAC regarding applications for bike and pedestrian funding, it is clear that some suburbs are entering the competition for funding. In the case of the Austin area, it is difficult to determine whether a large percentage of suburban cities receive the TA funding they request, as full application lists for those who did not win requested grants are not publicly available. This information could likely be obtained through a request for information. However, many of Georgetown's closest peers received funding in the most recent round of obligations -- Cedar Park, Round Rock, Hutto, and Leander. Peer cities with small governments but slightly different funding constraints include Taylor and San Marcos, which were both able to submit for and receive bike funding in 2016. This suggests that similarly situated cities are finding value in applying to receive TA funding, and several have been able to begin constructing bike lanes or other infrastructure as a result.

Houston, another major Texas city, has some important differences to the Austin area when considering funding options for bike infrastructure. It is surrounded by a larger number of more populous suburbs than is Austin, reflecting the size of the entire region. Houston also has a geographically more expansive urban fabric than Austin. However, it is a major city in the state of Texas and its MPO, H-GAC, is required to have a very similar process for fund allocation to CAMPO. Houston's suburbs can be considered very similar to Georgetown and other Texas suburbs in their available funding options. Additionally, H-GAC has rich data available regarding who applied to and received funding in its 2015 call for applications. MPOs must keep track of this information but can choose different methods for sharing or reporting it to the public, and H-GAC's is very clear and open.

It was most notable that suburban cities were very successful in their applications and were not denied any bike and pedestrian funding in Houston's 2015 project call, signaling that suburban projects can score very well for TA fund allocation. Similarly situated cities, Pearland and Conroe could be peers to ask for guidance, as both submitted independently and were able to receive funding allocations for bike infrastructure. Conroe won a multifaceted Safe Routes to School application that was a joint effort between the City and the Independent School District, and a very similar group of projects could be assembled for an application based on Georgetown's proposed network. These successful applications may offer valuable insights for Georgetown and other suburban jurisdictions with very limited bike infrastructure.

Houston area partnerships with TxDOT demonstrate an opportunity for the few instances where bike lanes are planned on Georgetown's TxDOT right of ways, or any other suburbs that might plan to install bike infrastructure on state right of ways. It is a natural move to partner with TxDOT and allow applications for funding to be submitted using the state agency's manpower. Beyond the application assistance, there could be a financially beneficial partnership as well, as TxDOT could share the cost of the project.

Overall, there was a strong trend toward partnerships and shared responsibility for bike and pedestrian funding applications in the 2018 call for projects. Although the results of that call cannot yet be examined for success, suburbs may look to this strategy more often in the future in order to source the needed manpower for grant applications. Many of Georgetown's peers seem to be taking the approach of producing joint applications when

possible, and this could be very effective in all suburbs. Common partners are TxDOT, school districts, and economic development corporations (H-GAC, 2016).

CHAPTER 4: THE STATE OF BICYCLE FUNDING & THE SUBURBAN DILEMMA

State of Bike Funding Nationally

Bike Funding Trends

As mentioned in the introduction, cities large and small are recognizing a demand for increased bicycling facilities as part of a global shift toward sustainability and are looking for ways to fund projects that will help more citizens choose biking over driving. People for Bikes conducted an online survey in 2013 which garnered responses from 107 individuals, and 82 cities in 36 states (People for Bikes, 2013). Though the survey is not statistically significant in representing the whole nation, it provides interesting insight into how cities of various sizes view bike funding. More than half of the cities that responded report that their primary funding source for bike projects is local revenues. Respondents emphasized flexibility as the main advantage to this type of funding as the local government has the highest discretion over spending at this level. Federal funding can take much longer to reach the municipality, and there are almost always additional processes or regulations that must be followed, such as reporting during the spending process, and additional layers of compliance such as NEPA environmental review processes (FHWA, 2016). Federal funding also typically operates on a reimbursement model, meaning that the municipality needs to have the ability to initially cover the cost of a project and carry it until reimbursement. State funding consists in large part of federal funding which has been allocated to the state through a formula, which the state DOT has discretion to allocate. States can also raise their own money through state gas taxes, which depending on the state, can be spent on road projects as well as on other initiatives including bike and pedestrian infrastructure, transit, education, and many others (Nguyen-Hoang & Bogin, 2017). Both

state options require processes and decisions outside of the municipality's control in order to secure bike funding. For example, Texas has a state gas tax, but it cannot be used to support modes of transportation other than automobile travel. Thirty-five percent of the survey respondents say that federal funding plays a leading role in their bike funding strategies[2], and only 13% say that state government is their key influencer (People for Bikes, 2013).

The table below is taken from the same report and shows a breakdown of the percentages of cities which reported using each type of available funding.

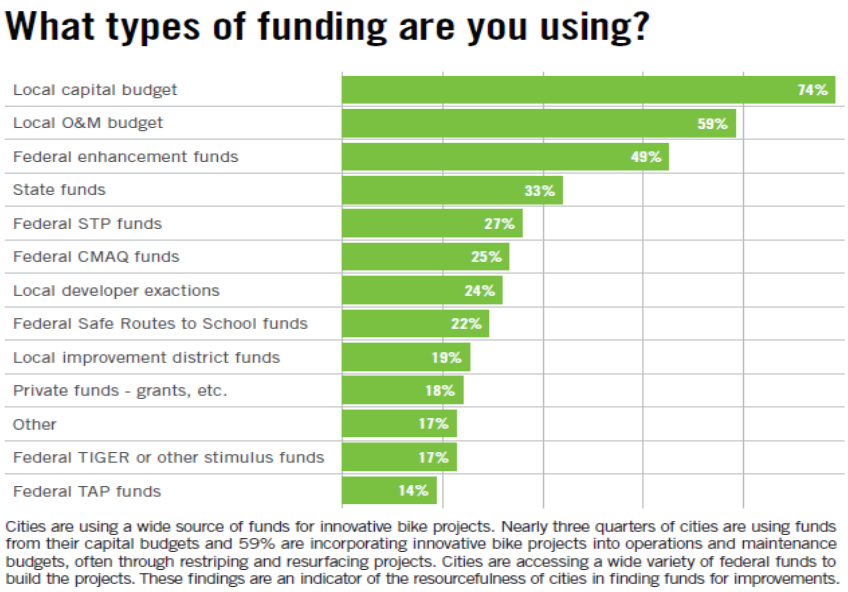

Figure 6. Funding sources used by cities for bike infrastructure

[2] It is stated in the report that cities which **primarily** use federal funds are planning large, innovative projects with higher price tags that fit into much larger mobility plans.

It is clear to see the root sources that many cities are looking toward while creating a funding plan for bike projects. Local capital and operating budgets are the primary means of driving implementation. This creates potential for decreased public support as this type of spending directs local tax revenues away from other projects. Federal funding falls just behind in the form of the former Transportation Enhancements fund, which is now encompassed in the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside under the FAST Act (FHWA, 2019)[3].

State Influence & Bike Spending in Texas

As mentioned, state level priorities can impact local governments' abilities to acquire funding from state, federal, and regional sources. A few specific state level factors have been shown to potentially impact dollars spent on bike and pedestrian initiatives. Under previous federal surface transportation programs such as ISTEA, states had authority to choose how much funding eligible for bicycle projects was handed down to MPOs, and this gave very high levels of control to states (Handy & McCann, 2010). Under the previous MAP-21 Act and current FAST Act, 50 percent of TA Set Aside funding — the primary federal bike funding source — is required to go to MPOs based on population. State departments of transportation are still consulted by MPOs regarding decisions to allocated bicycle funding to certain projects, and have some flexibility in how much oversight they would like to practice. (FHWA, 2014).

[3] In the time since this report Safe Routes to School, Transportation Enhancements, and an Surface Transportation Program (STP) set aside have all been wrapped into a Transportation Alternatives set aside that replaced the TAP program. This block of funding is administered through states and MPOs, as will be discussed later in this report.

Even with this recent devolution of power to MPOs, states still have power to set the non-federal match requirement to receive federal grants. Non-federal (or local) match funds are the portion of the total project cost that must come from non-federal sources. The standard percentage set federally is 20 percent, meaning that if a locality receives funding for a bike lane through the Transportation Alternatives program, the federal money would cover 80 percent of the project cost, and the remainder would need to come from other sources. If a state raises the percentage match requirement, the result would be more projects throughout the state receiving smaller amounts of money. This might be positive or negative depending on the needs of the state's cities and their ability to provide local matching funds. Conversely, some states use state-level funds to meet the local match portion themselves to shift the burden off of local governments to raise the amount of funds required by the match. This typically allows fewer projects to acquire funding since the state is using its own bicycle eligible dollars to further projects that already have federal funds flowing to them through MPOs (Handy & McCann, 2010).

State level bike and pedestrian staff size can also have an impact on ultimate spending on these types of projects, because having staff available to inform and support MPOs and local governments can encourage applications and improve their quality (Handy & McCann, 2010).

These factors could have an influence in Texas. The state allocates the required 50 percent of TA Set Aside funds to MPOs, but elects not to hand down more control. Texas, like many states, also keeps the 20 percent local match requirement set by the federal government. TxDOT has elected to implement staffing at the state level, employing a

Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator at the state level, as well as for each of the 25 districts it serves

Although Texas seems to hover at the status quo in terms of policies impacting bicycle funding, it ranks very low in terms of bike and pedestrian dollars invested per capita, at 35th out of the 50 states in the League of American Bicyclists' 2016 Benchmarking Report (League of American Bicyclists, 2016). This signals that state priorities have not been particularly focused on bicycle spending, which decreases the likelihood that suburbs, and possibly any cities in the state, might have a high level of access to dollars to spend on bike projects. It is estimated that the state spent $1.85 per person per year on biking and walking projects between 2012 and 2014, while the average across states was $2.85. During this same time period, $1.4 million or 1.5% of all federal transportation funds allocated to the state, were obligated to bike and pedestrian projects, demonstrating that while percentages may be low, some money is still flowing to this type of infrastructure (League of American Bicyclists, 2016).

In the latest annual state report card released by the League of American Bicyclists, Texas was ranked 31st out of 50 states in the Infrastructure and Funding category, which is based on factors such as ease of design and building of bike infrastructure, state transportation funding allocated to bikes, and whether the state takes advantage of federal funding available for walking and biking infrastructure. The 2018 progress report numbers suggest that Texas is expected to drop to number 36 in this specific category over the next ten years with current spending only amounting to 1.3% of FHWA funds spent on biking and walking; as a point of reference, Delaware, the state ranked 1st, spent 3.5% (Leagues of American Bicyclists, 2018).

Based on a 2018 interview with Jack Daly, Assistant to the City Manager in Georgetown, TX, cities of a smaller size simply don't pursue grants and funding streams due to the required staff time and resources. It isn't cost effective, and in some cases, the City may be better off waiting until bike infrastructure can be funded through the General Fund or in the Capital Improvement Program. These methods also require staff time, but not dedicated staff as the budget and CIP process already happen every year. If all similarly situated cities in Texas subscribe to related strategies, it would be logical that the state is not performing well in bike fund allocation, as this funding simply isn't being pursued by some of the projects that might be shovel-ready. This isn't a reflection on TxDOT alone, but rather a combination of state-level priorities, MPO priorities, and local governments' unwillingness to demonstrate to these higher bodies that bike funding is a priority.

The Suburban Dilemma

Larger cities, unsurprisingly, have larger staffs, and therefore may have more capacity to handle grant submittals. While these cities also have higher demand for bicycle infrastructure due to their larger populations and densities, studies have also shown that there is a correlation between staff size and the winning of federal grants of all kinds. There is also correlation between grant success and the size of local financial resources available for leverage to access federal funding (Hall, 2008). This puts larger cities at an advantage, even if certain suburbs are demanding expanded infrastructure. This phenomenon is demonstrated in Texas by the fact that the City of Austin has 25 full-time equivalent City staff members hired to work on bike and pedestrian initiatives and Houston has 10. Dallas, Fort Worth, El Paso, and San Antonio have small dedicated bike and ped staff as well

(Alliance for Biking and Walking, 2016). Bike planning has been growing in popularity dramatically in the past three years, and these numbers are likely higher today than at the time of the survey. Dedicated staff, even if it's just one to two people, can help not only apply for grants, but also help move projects along and coordinate implementation, as reflected in the built out bike networks in well-staffed cities. Austin has more than 250 miles of bike infrastructure, Dallas more than 115, Fort Worth nearly 125, Houston just over 200, and San Antonio over 300 (Alliance for Biking and Walking, 2016).

By contrast, many suburbs in Texas share control of bike planning activities between general transportation departments, planning departments, parks departments, and public works. This is true of Pearland, which promotes cycling through its Transportation Operations Department and its Parks and Recreation Departments (City of Pearland, 2019). The City of Cedar Park housing bike planning efforts within its Parks Department (City of Cedar Park, 2009). The subject of this report's case study, Georgetown, also has no dedicated staff member for walking and biking initiatives, although the Parks Department has been diligent in building out the city's trail network. On street bicycle infrastructure, intersections, and improvements outside of parks are the shared responsibility of the Planning and Public Works Departments, both of which have many other initiatives that must be addressed day to day.

Based on a review of submitted proposals for TA and Safe Routes to School funds to both Texas MPOs and TxDOT, some smaller Texas cities have outsourced their grant writing to independent contractors or nonprofits. This City-contractor relationship could take several forms, including an arrangement where the contractor is paid a bonus if the grant is successful, or a City could add grant writing services on to services provided by an

existing contractor. This could be an appropriate option for Georgetown and its peers. It should be noted that contracting outside grant support does not offer solutions to issues beyond the scope of this report, such as the ability of the staff to meet the requirements of spending the money once it is obtained, or to maintain the infrastructure once it is in place.

In taking inventory of on and off street bicycle infrastructure, it seems that Texas suburbs have been rather successful in funding off-street trails. with federal, state, regional, and private grants specifically targeting this type of path. Most suburbs have some level of trail system that is managed by a parks department. For example Pearland, a suburb of Houston, has more than 27 miles of total bicycle infrastructure, but only 5.47 miles of on street infrastructure (City of Pearland, 2019). Georgetown has nearly 10 miles of trails that run through its parks system, and only 1.6 miles of on street bike lanes constructed by private developers (City of Georgetown, 2019). Dallas' suburbs nearly all have trail maps (Bike DFW, 2019). This may be in part because many regional entities are invested in these types of projects due to their typically longer lengths and multi-jurisdictional crossovers. This may also be a product of most cities having parks and recreation departments, which effectively serve as dedicated staff for implementing trail projects. There is also potential for greater access to federal funds for recreational trails because the state cannot transfer funds allocated to the Recreational Trails Program to other federal formula programs, ensuring these funds are allocated for their original purpose. Small portions of other bicycle-eligible federal funds such as the TA set aside can, in fact, be diverted to other needs (FHWA, 2016).

Because suburbs in Texas seem to be more familiar with creating funding plans for trails, this type of infrastructure will not be explored in this study. On street infrastructure

is the primary target for creating funding strategies as suburbs have built less of this type and therefore have less experience funding it.

CHAPTER 5: A GUIDE TO FUNDING OPTIONS & CONCLUSIONS

The following guide gives a high level view of how each proposed funding option performs in terms of three categories: 1) effort required, 2) potential payoff, and 3) competitiveness of a suburban bike project relative to the other options. It should be noted that this scoring rubric loses some of the nuance required in making funding decisions, but is intended as a starting point in deciding which sources may be appropriate for a particular project.

Scoring was tallied using the guidelines in the rubrics below, with individual point allocations within each for specific criteria in each category. Lower total scores in a particular category indicate more positive outcomes within those scoring criteria. Lower scores overall represent the greatest chances for potential payoff and success, considering the effort required. Factors were chosen after review of many types of applications and processes for the funding mechanisms previously outlined.

To calculate level of effort required for particular funding options, three factors were taken into account: number of steps, whether specialized knowledge is required, and whether dedicated staff would be needed. Steps were identified by reviewing the full application process for each funding option. Specialized knowledge requirements were decided based on the depth of the information requested. For example, some applications only require the applicant to include an amount and the purpose the bike infrastructure will serve in the community. Others require very time consuming and difficult analyses such as a cost-benefit analysis or a detailed construction phasing breakdown. Dedicated staff

requirements were determined similarly – using the level of depth required for the application or development of the funding opportunity. If extra analyses such as cost benefit analysis were required outside of the application itself, funding was scored to require staff.

Payoff was calculated based on the amount of funding that could potentially be received, whether the money needs to be paid back (a loan), and if matching is required. Amounts were all pulled from the application criteria, as all grants and loans set requirements for maximum dollar awards. Loans were given extra points because the funds would need to be paid back, which is less cost-beneficial when compared to a grant. Matching requirements were stated in all application materials.

The final category, competitiveness, was calculated using a number of factors including: 1) whether the mechanism is intended for and therefore used to fund bicycle infrastructure specifically for all, most, some, or none of its applicants, and 2) whether that particular type of grant or funding mechanism has ever actually been used for suburban bicycle infrastructure which was determined by a review of previous funded projects. For those that are not grants or do not require an application there is a category for non-competitive methods.

Table 4. Effort Scoring Rubric

EFFORT	***Points***				
Criteria	**3**	**2**	**1**	**0**	**TOTAL**
Number of steps	**4+ steps**	**2-3 steps**	**1 step**	**--**	**High 4-5 points**
Specialized knowledge required	**--**	**--**	**Yes**	**No**	**Medium 3 points**
Dedicated staff required	**--**	**--**	**Yes**	**No**	**Low 1-2 points**

Table 5. Payoff Scoring Rubric

PAYOFF	***Points***				
Criteria	**3**	**2**	**1**	**0**	**TOTAL**
Funding amount	**$1k-$100k**	**$100k-$2M**	**$2M+**	**--**	**High 4 points**
Loan	**Yes**	**--**	**--**	**No**	**Medium 3 points**
Matching required	**--**	**--**	**Yes**	**No**	**Low 2 points**

Table 6. Competitiveness Scoring Rubric

COMPETITIVENESS	***Points***					
Criteria	**3**	**2**	**1**	**0**	**-1**	**TOTAL**
Frequency awarded to bike projects alone	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Often**	**--**	**--**	**High 3 points**
Suburban bike projects (bonus point)	**--**	**--**	**--**	**--**	**Yes**	**Medium 2 points**
Non-competitive/ not applicable	**--**	**--**	**--**	**Yes**	**--**	**Low 0-1 points**

This scoring table reflects that, as predicted, local funding options require the lowest levels of effort relative to other options. Local options also benefit from lack of competition, and since the amount is chosen rather than requested, generally cover the cost of the project. These attributes serve to make local funds the primary method through which bicycle infrastructure is funded. There are also very suitable options stemming from TxDOT, MPOs, and private and nonprofit options. The following coded guide is ranked roughly from most suitable for suburban bike infrastructure to least.

Table 7. Funding Source Ratings

POINT OF ACCESS	FUNDING MECHANISM	EFFORT	PAYOFF	COMPETITIVENESS
Local *(dependent on state law)*	TIRZ Funds	LOW	HIGH	HIGH
Local	Capital Improvement Program	LOW	HIGH	HIGH
TxDOT	Bike Lanes on TxDOT Roads	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH
TxDOT	SRTS Grant	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH
Local *(dependent on state law)*	Development Impact Fees	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
Local	Bonds	LOW	LOW	HIGH
Local	Parking Benefits Districts	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
Private/ Nonprofit	Walmart Foundation Community Grant	LOW	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
Private/ Nonprofit	State Farm Good Neighbor Citizenship Company Grant	LOW	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
CAMPO	TA Set Aside	HIGH	MEDIUM	HIGH
Private/ Nonprofit	PeopleForBikes Community Grant	MEDIUM	LOW	HIGH
Federal	BUILD Grant	HIGH	HIGH	LOW
Federal	INFRA Grant	HIGH	HIGH	LOW
Federal	TIFIA Loan	HIGH	LOW	LOW

Based on reviewing the application procedures, requirements, and past awards, federal discretionary funds require very high levels of effort, and often bike projects are not competitive for these funding sources. However, high payoff can sometimes result if the odds are overcome and a bike project is funded in this manner through inclusion in a larger project.

State and MPO funding options show promise as the primary place that local governments should be looking when funding bicycle infrastructure outside of their own pockets. These grants often do require a moderate amount of up-front effort, but payoff meets needs, suburban bicycle projects are very well suited to these grants' scoring criteria, and there is an established track record for these pots funding exactly the types of projects in question.

Private and nonprofit grants do not seem to typically require as rigorous processes as federal, state, and MPOs and may not require the staffing or technical knowledge that some other grants do. However, they often have small payouts and are difficult to win due to the large volume of competitors and wide breadth of eligible projects outside of bike and pedestrian infrastructure. These could make sense in particular circumstances for smaller projects, but not as a regularly tapped resource in a bicycle funding plan.

CHAPTER 6: CASE STUDY — APPLICATION TO PROPOSED BIKE INFRASTRUCTURE IN GEORGETOWN

It is possible that in choosing appropriate sources for funding individual bicycle projects various stakeholders within City government may have differing opinions regarding which method is most appropriate. For this reason, it is recommended here that initial funding plans include two to three streams that could be tapped for each project to leave room for discussion in final decision-making conversations. This provides a starting point for making these decisions quickly and efficiently. Not all projects may have more than one, if any, appropriate funding streams outside of the City's budget, and local funding can be the best path in a number of cases. While the City's general fund is not directly listed as an option considered through this scoring rubric — although CIP funding can come from many places including the general fund — it is always a silent final choice for any project.

The City of Georgetown, TX's Bicycle Master Plan, Bike Georgetown was developed in 2018 and 2019, and is on track for official adoption by City Council in fall of 2019. In order to demonstrate by example how the proposed funding options and scoring matrix may be implemented to choose methods for funding projects within a bicycle master plan, funding streams are identified here for Bike Georgetown's Top 10 projects. The following map demonstrates the location and treatment type proposed for the Top 10 projects within the Plan.

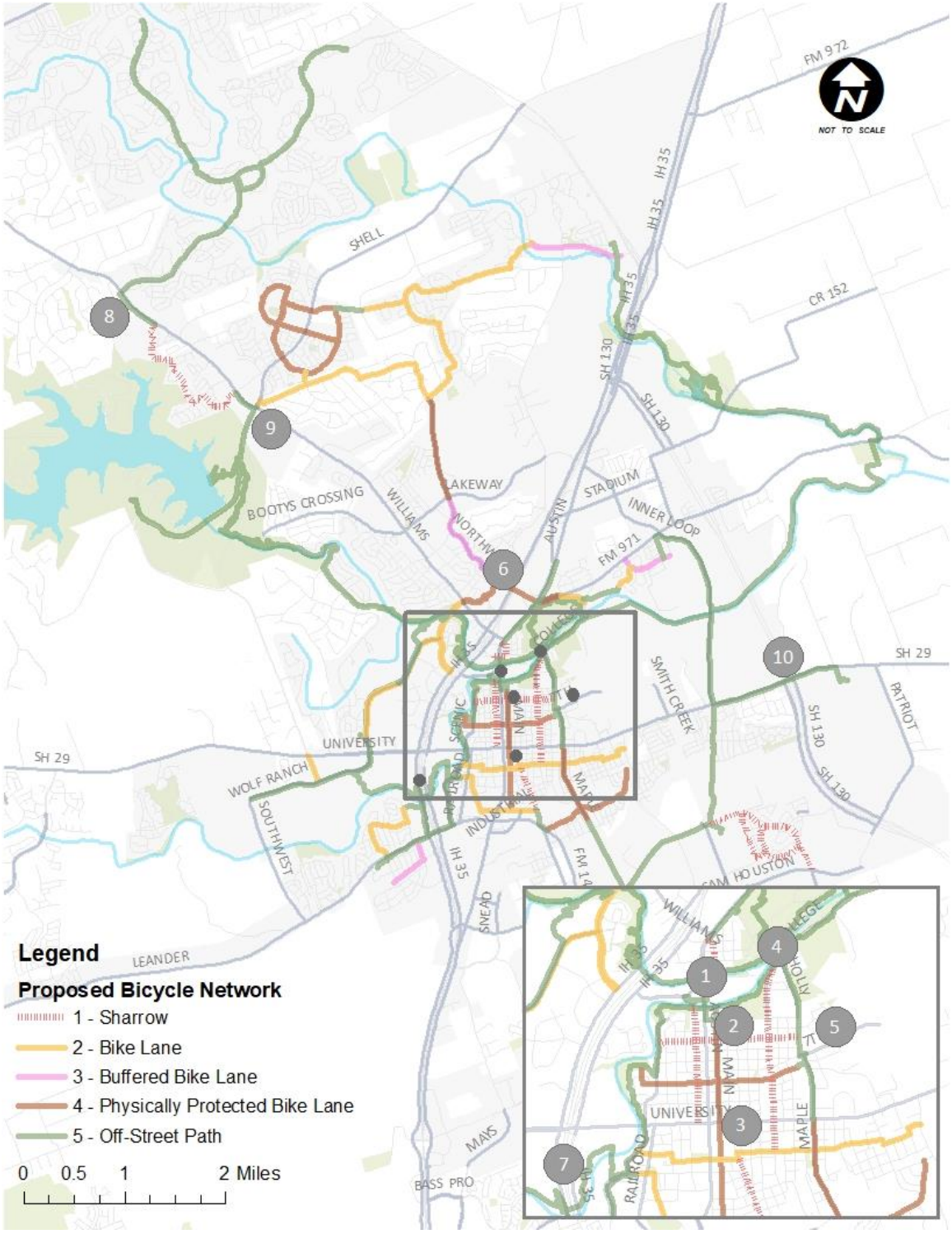

Figure 7. Bike Georgetown Top 10 Projects

The Top 10 projects and cost estimates are provided in the table below. Estimated costs do not include removal of existing roadway striping, or extensive infrastructure improvements, such as bridges. The build-out of the recommended priority bicycle network (the Top 10), without considering maintenance costs, staffing, and other operations, is currently estimated between $1.7 and $3.5 million (City of Georgetown, 2019).

Table 8. Bike Georgetown Top 10 Projects

Project Rank	Project Name	Cost Est. Low	Cost Est. High	Length (Miles)	Description
1	Austin Ave. Bridge	$129,042	$237,882	0.49	Off-street path connecting across San Gabriel River that will enable bicyclists to safely travel north-south in central Georgetown and connect to the Northwest Blvd. Bridge project
2	**8th St:** Scenic Dr. trail Connection to Maple St.	$141,768	$378,521	1.04	Bicycle corridor along 8th St. through Downtown connecting the San Gabriel River Trail, Georgetown Library, City Hall, the Square, and Maple St.
3	**Main St:** Buffered bike lane from 2nd St. to 21st St.	$156,613	$430,608	1.20	Bicycle corridor connecting cyclists to central and southern Georgetown as part of the shadow network recommendation to divert cyclists off of Austin Ave.
4	Holly Street Bridge	$36,096	$66,542	0.14	Connection across San Gabriel River from Holly St. to the North San Gabriel River Trail providing a higher crossing for increased resilience in heavy storms
5	**Maple St. Phase 1:** 7th St. to Britannia St.	$196,690	$455,310	1.14	North-south route through central Georgetown to Southwestern University that incorporates a combination of off-street paths and protected bicycle lanes, including a safe connection across University Blvd.
6	**Northwest Blvd./ IH-35 Crossing Phase 1:** Rivery Dr. to FM-971	$107,356	$296,186	1.08	Primary connection for cyclists across IH-35 which the City of Georgetown and TxDOT have existing plans for, including bike facilities

Table 8. (continued)

7	**San Gabriel River Crossing at St. David's Hospital:** Scenic Dr. to Wolf Ranch Town Center	$237,302	$437,454	0.91	Connection point across IH-35 allowing residents in south and southwest Georgetown to connect to the San Gabriel River Trail, Wolf Ranch Town Center, and the Square
8	**Williams Dr:** Del Webb Blvd. to Gatlin Creek	$118,601	$218,635	0.45	Off-street path providing safe cyclist access to commercial spaces in west, central and southern Georgetown through the existing parks and trails network
9	**DB Wood Rd:** Wildwood Dr. to Overlook Park along Williams Dr. & DB Wood Rd.	$193,356	$356,442	0.74	Critical connection from northwestern neighborhoods to the existing trail network providing an alternative to riding on arterials
10	**SR-29 East View HS connection across SR 130:** Reinhardt Blvd. to Eastview Dr.	$327,823	$604,325	1.26	Critical safety connection giving students and faculty access to East View High School across SR-29

Because these are the first projects to be implemented as part of the new bike plan, it is recommended that they are built quickly in order to begin garnering public support for the remaining projects. Due to this time sensitivity, primarily targeted funding sources that ranked green in the competitiveness category should be considered. This eliminates the three federal discretionary options, as well as all but one of the private or nonprofit options, suggesting that a combination of state, MPO, and local funding may be most appropriate.

It is next important to note the level of funding required for each project to ensure that if effort is exerted to apply for funding that it will be worthwhile and able to push the project through to completion. All of the Top 10 projects, other than the Holly St. Bridge,

happen to classify within the medium cost category on this scoring rubric, falling between $100,000 and $2 million. Therefore, the funding options will likely need to return an orange or green result in the payoff category to meet needs. This deduction calls into question the appropriateness of a local bond option. However, bonds should be considered slightly differently than grants as the money must be repaid, but is often still a prudent way to implement public projects. In this case, unless a transportation bond is already under consideration and could wrap in bicycle funding, this option may not be timely for quick implementation.

Because these projects are medium sized in terms of investment, it would likely also be prudent to choose funding sources that require lower levels of effort to ensure that costs do not outweigh benefits.

After combining each specific need from each of the three categories, it appears that funds from existing TIRZ districts and CIP inclusion may be the most suitable financing methods, with the options of TxDOT SRTS funding, inclusion of bike infrastructure on TxDOT roads, and development impact fees requiring slightly more effort, but showing as strong contenders. These are not the only sources recommended, as the scoring rubric alone did not inform the choices presented below. Rather, a combination of the scoring rubric, local knowledge, and further research produced the following potential funding sources for each priority segment of the Georgetown Bicycle Master Plan.

Table 9. Bike Georgetown Potential Funding Options

Project Rank	Project Name	Top Funding Mechanism Options
1	**Austin Ave. Bridge**	• Inclusion on TxDOT Roads • Downtown TIRZ • Development Impact Fees (Riverplace Georgetown)
2	**8th St:** Scenic Dr. trail Connection to Maple St.	• Downtown TIRZ • Capital Improvement Program • Development Impact Fees (mixed use development at the corner of 8th and Church)
3	**Main St:** Buffered bike lane from 2nd St. to 21st St.	• Downtown TIRZ (northern half) • TxDOT SRTS (Purl Elementary)
4	**Holly Street Bridge**	• Capital Improvement Program
5	**Maple St. Phase 1:** 7th St. to Britannia St.	• TxDOT SRTS (Purl Elementary)
6	**Northwest Blvd./ IH-35 Crossing Phase 1:** Rivery Dr. to FM-971	• TxDOT Roads (I-35, *in progress*)[4] • 2015 Transportation Bond (*in progress)*
7	**San Gabriel River Crossing at St. David's Hospital:** Scenic Dr. to Wolf Ranch Town Center	• TxDOT Roads (I-35) • Wolf Lakes TIRZ • Development Impact Fees (Wolf Lakes Village)
8	**Williams Dr:** Del Webb Blvd. to Gatlin Creek	• CAMPO Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (due to recommendations in the Williams Drive study and ongoing partnership) • TxDOT SRTS (Benold Middle School and Frost Elementary)
9	**DB Wood Rd:** Wildwood Dr. to Overlook Park along Williams Dr. & DB Wood Rd.	• CAMPO TA Funding (due to recommendations in the Williams Drive study and ongoing partnership) • TxDOT SRTS (McCoy Elementary and Village Elementary)
10	**SR-29 East View HS connection across SR 130:** Reinhardt Blvd. to Eastview Dr.	• TxDOT SRTS (East View High School)

[4] Williamson County. (2018). http://ftp.dot.state.tx.us/pub/txdot/my35/capital/implementation-plan/williamson/williamson.pdf

Based on this exercise, it seems that leveraging several tools in addition to the general fund would be beneficial in more efficiently building out Georgetown's bicycle network. Partnerships with TxDOT could prove very beneficial due to the strong presence of state-owned I-35 in Georgetown, one of the most commonly cited barriers to cycling. Although Georgetown would still need to contribute financially to these projects, TxDOT dollars could be leveraged as well (TxDOT, 2015).

The established and future TIRZs in the city are also important resources to consider in allocating funding to bicycle infrastructure, as multiple proposed segments coincide with their boundaries, and bike lanes are already authorized as approved uses of funds in each.

With recent strong development interest in the area, development impact fees should be strengthened and utilized where appropriate to garner private dollars to build bike infrastructure where it is planned and larger-scale developments are being proposed (City of Georgetown, 2019). Georgetown currently has water and wastewater impact fees in its Code of Ordinances (City of Georgetown, 2019), and has commissioned traffic impact fee studies in the past for potential incorporation into City policy (City of Georgetown, 2009). With the present car-dependent state of Georgetown, it may be difficult to make a case for a development causing a proportional impact requiring a bike lane. However, street impact fees could be an encouraging place to start with incentives for implementing bicycle infrastructure to reduce a developer's obligation.

As part of the development of the Bicycle Master Plan, it was determined that a number of the projects in the Top 10 are within the two-mile radius of a public school, as

required to receive Safe Routes to School funding. An application for TxDOT SRTS funding that combines all of these projects into one proposal could provide a very logical and fruitful return on effort and allow simultaneous construction of lanes in various parts of the City if obtained. This application in particular might be an ideal opportunity to leverage other resources such as a consultant to help draft the application, or to partner with the Georgetown Independent School District to share the burden.

Lastly, in many cases it does make sense to use more general local funds through the CIP in order to build out smaller projects that do not fit well into the criteria for outside grants. Georgetown's CIP is divided into three categories: Georgetown Utility Systems, Transportation, and General Capital Projects. Bicycle infrastructure would likely fall into the transportation category, but in some cases may be classified in the General Capital Projects category where sidewalks, parks, and the Downtown Master Plan reside. A key source within the CIP could be Georgetown's street maintenance sales tax, which is a quarter cent tax consistently approved by voters that goes toward transportation projects and road maintenance. This tax set-aside can be used only for curb-to-curb street maintenance, and is prohibited from funding new roads or off street trails, as reiterated in its most recent renewal, Prop A in 2018. When the tax is up for renewal in the future, the City should consider amending the terms to dedicate of portion of proceeds to bike infrastructure recommended in the Bicycle Master Plan. Sidewalks in the 2016 CIP were funded by transportation bonds, nearly $1M were allocated in that year and nearly $5.5M over a five-year period (City of Georgetown, 2016). The 2018 CIP incorporates multiple road projects that correspond with the locations of proposed bicycle improvements in Bike Georgetown. Funds for most of these road redesign or resurfacing projected are set be

expended in 2020-2022, creating an opportunity to work the proposed bike lanes or treatments into the design of the project (City of Georgetown, 2018).

Some projects on the list already have a funding source in mind, or have had outside agencies involved in the planning process that may also be able to assist with funding. This include the Northwest Blvd. project which is already included in the Transportation Bond passed in 2015 (City of Georgetown, 2015), and the Williams Dr. project which heavily engaged CAMPO in the planning and design process (City of Georgetown & CAMPO, 2018). Although the Williams Dr. project itself may not have originally qualified based on the rubric to apply for CAMPO TA set aside funds, the familiarity of the MPO with the project could make this application a good fit for this project.

As a note, bonds may be an excellent options for future projects. Georgetown approved a General Obligation Transportation Bond in 2015 which authorized $105M to fund transportation projects over a 10-year period. Projects from the City's 2014 Master Sidewalk Plan were incorporated into that bond and proposed sidewalk segments have been built out as planned. Road projects funded in the planning and design phases by this 2015 bond could still potentially incorporate bicycle infrastructure, including streets proposed for bike improvements in the Georgetown Bicycle Master Plan such as DB Wood Rd., Shell Rd., Williams Dr., East University Ave., and SE Inner Loop (City of Georgetown, 2015). Should another transportation bond be brought to Georgetown voters in the future, incorporating bike infrastructure specifically, as sidewalks were incorporated into the 2015 bond, could be a very impactful and efficient way to fund some of the most critical routes.

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION

While it may be more challenging for suburban governments to create and execute creative, multi-faceted funding programs for bicycle plans, there are a number of options available that suit the needs of these types of municipalities. Even if a government decides to pursue just one or two grants or outside funding opportunities as part of an entire implementation plan, it can reduce the burden of building out bike infrastructure on the local budget, and therefore potentially increase public support. Furthermore, multiple funding options can help expediate the implementation process and serve residents more quickly, as local budgets do have a threshold for the number of or dollar amount of projects that might be funded in a particular year.

The trend toward partnerships and outside assistance for crafting grant applications could have great payoff potential for smaller, leaner governments. For example, partnering with nonprofits or school districts could help relieve the grant-writing burden could move a high-effort funding method to a medium or low one, shifting the payoff dynamics favorably. It would be particularly suitable to partner with the school district if the bike segment in question is a Safe Routes to School project, and it could make sense to partner with a non-profit if there is an economic development or community educational aspect included. In some cases, it could also be advisable to hire an outside contractor to help write a grant application if the benefit is high and the grant criteria are well suited to the project. This helps create staff to fill this need temporarily without needing to bring someone on board permanently, or remove a current staff member from other ongoing duties.

Lastly, beyond simply looking through available options, it is important to consider as much background knowledge and as many individual circumstances as possible in choosing appropriate funding sources for projects. Ongoing relationships with funding partners and site-specific context can help to increase the feasibility of certain grants or mechanisms that may not seem like a good fit initially.

Overall, it is prudent for suburban governments to explore all options when adopting a plan to construct new bicycle infrastructure rather than looking only to funding streams presently available. This commitment to exploration could have big benefits and require less effort than initially perceived.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: APPLICATION STEPS

TA Funding (MPOs)

Applications Steps (Moderate):

1. Application Form
2. Supporting Documentation (extensive)
3. Cost Benefit Analysis[5]

Safe Routes to School (TxDOT)

Applications Steps (Moderate, but lengthy effort):

*The full process from the call for projects to final award takes approximately 10 months.

1. Preliminary Application - Cities have approximately two months to fill out a high-level application that includes information about project location, population size, eligibility, and initial project readiness
2. Meet with local TxDOT District TA/SRTS Coordinator and District staff - Cities are encouraged to have a meeting or phone call with TxDOT staff to strengthen the preliminary application and to ensure eligibility before second round decisions are made

Detailed Application - If identified as eligible approximately two months after the Preliminary Application deadline, projects that move on will have to submit a detailed application. The deadline will be approximately two months following notification of

[5] https://47kzwj6dn1447gy9z7do16an-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Workshop-Presentation-Update.pdf

advancement to round two. This requires a more comprehensive overview of the proposed project, including a detailed construction budget and demonstration of how the proposed project meets specific TA and/or SRTS evaluation criteria

PeopleForBikes Community Grant Program (Nonprofit)

Application Process (moderate):

1. Submit a Letter of Interest that provides basic details about the organization and the project
2. The strongest letters of interest will receive an invitation to submit a full grant application[6]
3. Full applications are due which include expanded descriptions of the project, community benefits, how outcomes will be measured, several letters of support from public officials and business owners, maps, and budget information[7]
4. The Grant Committee evaluates each application based on the following criteria:

   Project quality – project scope, applicant's ability to complete project successfully, resources available, alignment between community need and project response, thoughtfulness in location and purpose.

   Benefits to the community – population(s) reached, reason and methods for picking this project at this time, potential to increase ridership

[6] https://pfb.sparkinfluence.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/PFB-2017-LOI-11-16.pdf

[7] https://pfb.sparkinfluence.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/PFB-2017-Full-Application.pdf

Measurement and evaluation – measurement methodology, applicant's ability to conduct measurement

Community support and partnerships – reasons for project prioritization, capacity to make the project a success, community, business, and leadership engagement

Role of PeopleForBikes funding – ability of our funds to make a difference, match or leverage of PFB funds

Diversity – geographic, project type, size of community

The Walmart Foundation Community Grant Program

Application process *(easy):*

Grant cycles open once a year, typically coming due in December, and involve a relatively simple online application process[8].

State Farm Good Neighbor Citizenship Company Grants

Application process *(easy):*

1. Submit online application which includes basic information about the project and budget between Sept. 1 and Oct. 31
2. Submit W-9 form along with application

8

https://www.cybergrants.com/pls/cybergrants/quiz.display_question?x_gm_id=2797&x_quiz_id=4503&x_order_by=1

BUILD Grants

Applications Steps (High Effort):

1. Project Information Form - basic information about the project, low effort https://www.transportation.gov/BUILDgrants/BUILD-info
2. Create a Grants.gov account - This is a one-time effort, but requires a number of steps including getting a DUNS number, register with the System for Awards Management (SAM), create a username and password, and the E-business POC at the organization has to authorize the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR). It is advised that this process can take 2-4 weeks to complete. http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html
3. Submit the full application on Grants.gov - this is lengthy and requires information about the project description, location, grant funds, sources of other funds, and uses of all project funds, a description of its merit criteria, and demonstration of project readiness.
4. Wait for evaluation - Criteria can be found in the Notice of Funding Opportunity https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/docs/policy-initiatives/build/114796/fed-reg-build-nofo-2018_0.pdf

TIFIA Loans

Applications Steps (High Effort):

1. Letter of Interest - “intended to identify major statutory, regulatory, financing or timing issues that would prevent the project from receiving TIFIA assistance. The estimated timeframe for the initial review is approximately 30 days, assuming that the Department receives all information as requested.”
2. Creditworthiness Review - “involves evaluation of the plan of finance, financial model, and feasibility of the pledged revenue. The estimated timeframe for the creditworthiness review is between 45 to 90 days after receipt of all requested information.” Once the DOT has concluded that the project satisfies statutory eligibility criteria, including a preliminary review of a project's creditworthiness and satisfaction of readiness requirements, the DOT will ask a project sponsor to provide a preliminary rating opinion letter from at least one NRSRO and submit $250,000 to the DOT to reimburse it for the costs incurred for services provided by its outside financial and legal advisors in connection with the review of the TIFIA Letter of Interest and application and the negotiation of the TIFIA transaction documents.
3. Oral Presentation - the applicant must appear before a panel to present the financial plan for the project and answer any questions

4. Application - if the project makes it through the first two steps, it will then be invited to actually apply - "will include review of project documents, notification of whether the application is complete or whether additional materials are needed, and approval or disapproval of the application. We estimate that the timeframe for approval is no more than 90 days after receipt of the application."
5. Loan agreement drafted[9]

[9] https://www.transportation.gov/buildamerica/programs-services/tifia/review-and-approval-process

APPENDIX B: TxDOT POLICY FOR BICYCLE INCLUSION

Texas Department of Transportation

MEMORANDUM

TO: District Engineers **DATE:** March 23, 2011

FROM: John A. Barton, P.E. John A. Barton, P.E.

SUBJECT: Guidelines Emphasizing Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations

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A recent federal policy statement on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations Regulations and Recommendations by USDOT signed on March 11, 2010, emphasizes an increased commitment to, and investment in, bicycle facilities and walking networks to help meet goals for cleaner, healthier air; less congested roadways; and more livable, safe, cost-efficient communities. This USDOT policy encourages the incorporation of safe and convenient walking and bicycling facilities into transportation projects.

With this stronger emphasis for multimodal transportation facilities, TxDOT is committed to proactively plan, design and construct facilities to safely accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians. It is critical that bicycle and pedestrian accommodations be considered and discussed as the need and purpose of a project is defined during the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, taking into consideration existing and anticipated bicycle and pedestrian facility systems and needs. In the NEPA document, the managing office should include a discussion in the project description of proposed bicycle and pedestrian facilities and linkages to transit stops and corridors. If no bicycle or pedestrian facilities are planned, the managing office shall state why no such facilities are planned. Plans, specifications, and estimates (PS&Es) shall also ensure that proposed designs include these accommodations, if applicable, and are constructed according to Texas Accessibility Standards and Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (TAS/ADAAG), AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities (AASHTO Bike Guide) and TxDOT's Roadway Design Manual (RDM).

The inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian facilities shall be considered when the project is scoped. Public input, when applicable, as well as local city and metropolitan planning organization bicycle and pedestrian plans shall be considered.

For all urbanized settings, regardless of the type of improvement, the following guidance is provided:

1. For construction projects within existing right-of-way and when the scope of work is limited to within the roadway typical section, the project plans should:
   - remove barriers to accommodate pedestrians according to TAS/ADAAG and TxDOT's Pedestrian Facilities (PED) standard sheets, and;
   - accommodate for bicyclists by restriping the existing roadway typical section to provide a 14-foot wide curb lane for shared use when practical.

2. For construction projects within existing right-of-way, but when the scope of work involves pavement widening, the project plans should:
   - accommodate bicyclists by widening the pavement to either provide a 14-foot wide curb lane for shared use or a 5-foot wide bicycle lane;
   - include necessary work to ensure all existing ADA curb ramps comply with current standards; and
   - reconstruct or add sidewalks and crosswalks to ensure a continuous ADA compliant pedestrian route.

3. For full reconstruction or new construction projects, where new right-of-way is acquired, the project plans should provide the desired roadway, bicycle and sidewalk geometric values shown in the RDM, AASHTO Bike Guide and TAS/ADAAG for each facility type.

4. On new construction projects, and where practical on reconstruction projects, which construct a raised median, a 6 foot median width should be provided for pedestrian refuge in accordance with the Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG).

The usable lane width for shared use in a wide curb lane is 14 feet and is measured from the edge stripe to the lane stripe or from the longitudinal joint of the gutter pan to lane stripe (the gutter pan should not be included as usable width). The curb offset is not included as part of the usable lane width for a shared use in a wide curb lane. When restriping or widening existing pavement to achieve a wide curb lane for shared use, the appropriate lane widths for the remaining lanes and curb offsets as defined in RDM should be maintained. The dimensions shown above for a wide curb lane or a bicycle lane are minimum values. Where traffic volumes or speeds are high, wider lanes for bicycles may be needed.

For projects in a rural setting, the following guidance is provided:

For off-system roadways greater than 400 ADT and all on-system roadways, where bridges are being replaced or bridge decks are being replaced or rehabilitated, a 5-foot shoulder (4' shoulder and 1' barrier offset) shall be provided on the structure and along the adjacent barrier.

These guidelines apply to all projects which are currently in the planning and design stages and projects whose environmental documents are approved after August 31, 2011. For projects whose environmental documents are approved on or prior to August 31, 2011, the use of these guidelines is at the option of the district.

Questions related to the use of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations may be directed to Maria Burke, Design Division at (512) 416-2703 or Tom Beeman, Design Division at (512) 416-2673. Future manual(s) updates will reflect this bicycle and pedestrian accommodation guidance as appropriate.

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APPENDIX C: SCORED FINANCING OPTIONS RUBRIC

POINT OF ACCESS	FUNDING SOURCE	EFFORT	PAYOFF	COMPETITIVENESS
Federal	BUILD Grant	2 1 1 4	1 0 1 2	3 0 0 3
Federal	TIFIA Loan	3 1 1 5	1 3 N/A 4	3 0 0 3
Federal	INFRA Grant	3 1 1 5	1 0 1 2 2	3 0 0 3
TxDOT	SRTS Grant	2 1 0 3	2 0 0 2	1 -1 0 0

TxDOT	Bike Lanes on TxDOT Roads	2 1 0 3	N/A	N/A
CAMPO	TA Set Aside	3 1 0 4	2 0 1 3	1 -1 0 0
Local	TIRZ Funds	1 1 0 2	2 0 0 2	0
Local	Capital Improvement Program	1 1 0 2	2 0 0 2	0
Local	Bonds	1 1 0 2	1 3 0 4	0

Local	Development Impact Fees	3 1 0 3	2 0 0 2	0
Local	Parking Benefits Districts	3 1 1 5	2 0 0 2	0
Private/Nonprofit	PeopleForBikes Community Grant	2 1 0 3	3 0 1 4	1 -1 0
Private/Nonprofit	Walmart Foundation Community Grant	1 0 0 1	3 0 0 3	2
Private/Nonprofit	State Farm Good Neighbor Citizenship Company Grant	1 0 0 1	3 0 0 3	2

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